

A reading from the Book the Prophet Jeremiah

The days are coming, says the Lord,

when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel
and the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant I made with their fathers:

the day I took them by the hand
to lead them forth from the land of Egypt.

But this is the covenant which I will make

with the house of Israel after those days, says the Lord.

I will place my law within them, and write it upon their hearts;

I will be their God, and they shall be my people.

No longer will they have need to teach their friends and relatives

how to know the Lord.

All, from least to greatest, shall know me, says the Lord.

The Word of the Lord. *R. Thanks be to God*

Commentary

Most couples will not immediately see the hidden beauty and the strength this passage has in its depth of illuminating the marital covenant. The marriage vows bind the couple into a covenant. This passage describe the ideal vision of what that covenant can look like.

Jeremiah was a prophet who could see and hear things from God that others could not. He is on his prophetic tower evaluating the past and future. In the past, God had made a covenant with the people, promising to be their God if they would be faithful to him in return. The covenant was broken. The people failed in fidelity. In this passage, Jeremiah speaks about a new covenant that will be given by God, “I will be their God, and they shall be my people.” The staggering difference in this second covenant is the absence of one little word, “if.” By omitting the word “if” God is making this covenant unconditionally. God is pledging complete, unconditional love. God has forgiven them for their infidelity, and this law of loving forgiveness is written on their hearts. This image of unconditional love as the foundation for a covenant is a mirror for what married couples strive to do and aspire to be for each another. Sacramental marriage reveals to the world this incredible love that God has for us. Husbands and wives enter into this sacrament with the same commitment to love as God has shown his people. Couples with a deep committed faith in God, those who have reconciled from difficult infidelities, and those committed to forgiveness and unconditional love will want to seriously consider this eloquent passage.